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## **DCF Works to Improve Child Care During Week of the Young Child**

The Week of the Young Child, designated as April 19 – 25 by Governor Doyle, celebrates the potential of the young child and reinforces the importance of quality child care. The Department of Children and Families is taking steps that will lead to improved early care and education for young children across the State.

“Our goal and that of Governor Doyle is to shine a spotlight on quality care and work with others to better their practices. Knowing that parents are entrusting providers with their children’s care and development, we are taking a number of steps to improve the services being received by young children in Wisconsin,” stated Secretary Bicha.

A few of the ways DCF is improving the quality of child care in Wisconsin:

- On Thursday, April 24 holding the inaugural meeting of the Governor’s State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, which will help DCF make informed decisions
- Championing the Quality Rating Improvement System in the Governor’s budget, which will identify high-quality programs, improve low-quality programs and better inform parents about the care their children are likely to receive. Listening sessions are being held across the state to discuss the most effective way to implement this.
- Visiting and evaluating the facilities, policies and practices of child care centers, which involve recommendations for improvements as well as punitive action if the centers are not performing to standards.
- Sharing information with parents and caregivers on the quality of child care facilities across the state so that they can make informed choices through the Child Care Search on the DCF website: [www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/family\\_resources.htm](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/family_resources.htm)

“We recognize the great responsibility we all hold to the tender, hopeful children among us and imagine the possibilities of their bright future,” stated Secretary Bicha. “In looking at the Governor’s budget, there are great opportunities to support children and positively impact children in their earliest stages of development.”

The care and education of all children are important. The Week of the Young Child emphasizes the particular opportunities in children under age five. A few facts underscore the special potential of the youngest citizens:

- the most rapid brain development occurs in young children from birth to three years, and research demonstrates that children’s experiences during the first five years of life have profound, lifelong effects
- early childhood development is recognized to involve a continuous process from birth through preschool, and the transition into elementary school
- high-quality early childhood programs offer both short-term positive effects on achievement and long-term positive effects on school and life success
- by supporting and developing our youngest citizens, we improve life for all of us in very tangible ways, including reduced crime, a stronger workforce and a better economic forecast

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